

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Methods and apparatus for collecting, storing, processing and using data are described. Network traffic probes are identified and attempts are made to configure the probes to generate network traffic data sets which are as close to a preselected common data format as possible. Application layer traffic data is collected in addition to network layer traffic data. The common data format uses delta count values, and terminal count mode format. Network data is obtained from a probe using one of the available table formats which is selected in the following order of preference: alMatrixTopN(Terminal Mode), alMatrixTopN(AllMode), alMatrix, nlMatrixTopN and nlMatrix. A database of collected network traffic information which includes multiple parallel sets of data stored at different resolutions is created. The data sets for each individual resolution are stored in a separate FIFO data structure and the oldest data records are overwritten when allocated data space becomes fully utilized.